

**Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards  
(CARES)  
For the Early Learning Workforce  
Round 4 Extension Request for Funds**

**Frequently Asked Questions – May 15, 2008**

**I. Eligibility**

- 1. Is participation in one of the previous rounds required in order to be eligible for Round 4 Extension funding?**

No. All county commissions are eligible for participation if they have an active CARES Program. They must however provide the required Family, Friends and Neighbors (FFN), Entry, and Permit level Tracks by September 30, 2008 (page 21).

**II. Application Submission Requirements**

- 1. When are Round 4 Extension applications due?**

Applications are due by 5:00 PM on June 5, 2008 (page 1).

- 2. Do we have to submit an application if we have participated in a previous round?**

Yes. Counties that already have an active CARES Program, and wish to extend their program under this RFF must complete Form 1 on page 32 as well as a budget. Counties that do not currently have a CARES Program must complete the entire application (page 3).

- 3. Is it necessary to attach the supply maps in color with the application?**

Supply maps are not required, but attachments that help describe the priority zones may be added to the application.

- 4. When will the project end?**

Round 4 Extension funding phase ends programmatically on June 30, 2009, with final expenditures ending on December 31, 2009 (page 3).

**5. Do you require commission approval for the application?**

Yes. The county commission chair must sign the application acknowledging the county commission's approval of the application.

**6. What period does the fiscal year cover?**

The fiscal year covers the period from July 1 to June 30 of the next year. For example, FY 2008-09 would cover the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 (see Budget Form, Attachment A, and page 22 – Funding Authority).

**7. Please clarify “distribute funds by September.” Does this mean for FY 2008/09 the stipends need to be distributed by September 2009?**

Yes (Form 2, page 33).

**8. Our county commission will not authorize a subcontract to operate the CARES Program until our application to First 5 California is approved. Is there any way to determine the status of our application prior to June 19, 2008?**

This is a non-competitive process and all applications that meet the RFF guidelines will be approved. If we receive a complete application by the deadline, and your commission certifies that it will operate the CARES Program described in the RFF, we will work with you to resolve any concerns about your application. Review of your application will begin as soon as it is received in our office. We will determine whether we can fund each application at the requested level after all applications are reviewed. The earlier you are able to submit the application, the better.

**9. We will not have our county commission's commitment for FY 2008/09 funding until July 2008. Your response says that the formal agreements forms for FY 2008/09 are due June 5, 2008. Will there be any latitude for submission of the formal agreement forms later than that date?**

No. First 5 California needs to determine the total allocation for this project by June 19, 2008. Submit the maximum amount you anticipate needing and then submit a revised budget following commission approval (see question 11).

**10. What if our county commission decides to decrease the amount of local investment for FY 2008/09 after the application is submitted? Can the First 5 California funded project be scaled back to reflect the lower investment by our commission?**

Yes. The scope of the proposed program must be retained, including required Tracks. A decrease in the local investment is permitted. If the local investment is decreased, the state match amount must be decreased to retain the required match level. You must resubmit the appropriate budget and funding partners pages and sign a new agreement form by December 30, 2008.

**11. Will counties be able to submit amended budgets that would result in a larger state match if, during this first year of transition and after further planning, additional local monies are found?**

No. County commissions will not be able to request more state matching funds than those requested in the county's CARES application. We suggest that you request the maximum amount of state matching funds you anticipate being able to match. Should you find that you are not able to secure local funding at the levels indicated in your application, you may submit revised budget forms reflecting the decreased local investment and state match. You will also be required to submit an addendum to your application should the decreased funding affect the scope of your project.

**12. Is more money, above the state match percentage, available?**

No. As stated on page 22, under "Funding Level and Match," First 5 California has established two groups of state match funding as detailed below:

- Group A Counties are those counties that received \$3 million or more in FY 2003/04 from monthly tax revenue disbursements. For Group A, the state match is 1:4. First 5 California will match up to 20 percent of the total eligible local CARES Program expenditures.
- Group B Counties are those counties that received less than \$3 million in FY 2003/04 from monthly tax revenue disbursements. For Group B, the state match is 1:2. First 5 California will match up to 33.3 percent of the total eligible local CARES Program expenditures (see Appendix A).

**13. Is there a minimum/maximum amount for how much can be spent on a specific Track?**

No. There is no minimum or maximum amount of funds that can or must be spent on any specific Track. The funding level of each Track should be based on

an assessment of the ECE staff in your county. Please provide a rationale in your application for your budget decisions.

**14. What expenses are non-allowable? Are equipment expenses allowable?**

All funds must be spent on this initiative. Examples of non-allowable expenses include out-of-state travel, and rental, lease, purchase or renovation of facilities. Reasonable equipment expenses, however, are allowable if they are wholly and directly related to the project (page 24).

**15. Does the non-allowable expenses criteria for matching funds also apply to county funds?**

Yes. The criteria apply to the county funds identified for state matching funds except in regards to facilities.

**16. Would it be possible to shift some of the indirect costs back to the state CARES, i.e. printing costs for application materials, data input expenses, etc.?**

No. Printing costs for application materials and data input costs are considered Program Coordination/Management costs and are allowable.

### **III. Program Requirements**

**1. What is a “minor” program change?**

A minor program change is one that may include a change that adds or deletes a Track but does not change the direction of the program (May 2008, page 3).

**2. In our county we used all the state match funding for the degree Track and to provide ELL support services. Next year we would like to do a straight match for each Track. Would that be considered a major change?**

If you did not describe them in your previous application, yes. If you did, it is not. You would just resubmit Form 1 and the budget pages.

**3. Are Head Start funds eligible for the match?**

Head Start funds are not eligible for the match (May 2008).

**4. You have said that a student must exhaust their financial aid loans before they can get the stipend. Is that correct?**

No, not before they can get a stipend, but before CARES support dollars may be used to help pay for their school. Students should be directed to other

opportunities in the community for possible funding. If the student has done that, and still has no access to other funds, CARES dollars may be used to support the needed units (May 2008).

**5. Can CARES dollars be used to fund a textbook loan program?**

Yes. It would be considered one of the support services.

**6. In our county we have never claimed additional local dollars that have been invested outside of CARES. We would like to do that this year. We have some other programs that would fund workforce development in other areas and we would like to start reporting those and drawing down additional match dollars.**

If the other programs relate specifically to supporting CARES participants in certain ways, such as with Higher Ed or Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN), or can be considered a support service for CARES participation components of the Higher Education Access Plan, then you may create those and add them to an expanded CARES Program. You must provide the information on those on Form 3 or 4b of this RFF (May 2008).

**7. So we could still do the extension short form and do an additional explanation for those changes or do we need to do the whole RFF?**

It depends on how extensive your changes or additions are. It could be that you just have to answer a few of the questions (in the RFF) that relate to those specific areas (May 2008).

**8. To get clarification about what documentation we're requiring from individuals to whom we're giving scholarships. Does that mean that they must turn in paperwork showing that they were denied financial aid before we can give them a scholarship?**

Participants must exhaust other areas, and CARES dollars should be the last resort. How a local county monitors and determines the required documentation is a local issue (May 2008).

**9. For an application from a program that is not significantly changing its direction, it says at the bottom of page 3 that we only need to submit Form 1. Does that mean that we do not need Forms 2, 3, 4a and 4b?**

That is correct (May 2008).

**10. What is the definition of the “Higher Education Access Plan?”**

This plan addresses the challenges in your county that CARES participants face in accessing their needed coursework to meet the CARES requirements, and how they will be addressed. There are goals and objectives over the period of the RFF that may be revised every year as needed (May 2008, page 15).

**11. Can this be done in narrative format?**

Narrative, bullets or charts are fine, as long as it is clear what the obstacles are, and the steps that have been taken to overcome them (May 2008).

**12. Are the last six months of the program (July 1, 2009 – December 31, 2010) intended specifically for late stipends and the compilation of data?**

Yes. We will be asking for budgets for 18 months, but those budgets cover only one program year. The period of July 30, 2009 – December 31, 2009 will **only** cover stipends related to the previous program year and the compilation of data and required reports. This budget is **not** for a one-half year regular CARES Program (May 2008).

**13. Must the percentages of Family Child Care (FFC) providers and center providers participating in this initiative equal the percentage each represents of providers in the county?**

That is the goal. While this may not be achievable in the first year, the program narrative should describe the steps taken toward achieving parity.

**14. Concerning the proportional participation of licensed family child care providers, will First 5 California be seeking a specific percentage?**

First 5 California would like to see the county commissions improving access to this program for this population and providing specific supports for them to continue their participation.

**15. How should differing salaries be handled – in terms of staff at child development centers, Head Start centers, and school district centers – with regards to stipends/incentives?**

Each county must decide where staff retention and professional development are an issue and act accordingly. In earlier rounds, some counties gave priority to those below a certain income.

**16. Do we have to collaborate with our Local Child Care Planning Council (LPC)?**

Yes. In order to ensure non-duplication of services and maximization of local funds, all county commissions must coordinate with their Local Child Care Planning Councils (LPC) and the AB 212 (Chapter 547, Statutes of 2000) local initiatives. Use the top portion of Form 4a to document support of the LPC, if you have not previously stated this collaboration (page 15).

**17. Will county commissions be offered training, other than that for the database?**

Yes. The CARES Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) contract will be continued. This contract provides regional meetings, conference calls on workforce development and CARES related topics, an annual conference, training on Child Development Permits, a CARES listserv and website, a hotline, and other related T&TA for CARES Programs.

**18. In terms of the ages of the children served, is school age acceptable?**

No. Providers must serve children birth to five in order to be eligible to receive incentives/stipends from this project. Providers not serving birth to five-year old children are not eligible. However, providers who are serving both children birth to five as well as school-age children during the program period are eligible.

**19. Is there a policy against collaborating with other local agencies that may receive AB 212 funding?**

Counties are highly encouraged to collaborate with other local agencies. Specifically, First 5 California believes that working with Local Child Care Planning Councils (LPCs) would be highly beneficial for both parties. Any money going to another agency must be in furtherance of this initiative as described in the application and adhere to the county procurement/ allocation rules. The applicant must account for the local and state funds spent toward this initiative separately in expenditure reports and the annual audit.

**20. In terms of local funding partners, is a letter of commitment required from each?**

No. Letters of commitment are optional. However, local funding partners must certify on Form 3, page 34 that they are providing a cash match (May 2008).

**21. Can the Growing, Learning and Caring Project be matched or is it considered state money?**

Those are considered state dollars. They are funded through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division and are not eligible (May 2008).

**22. What if our county commission will only approve (local) funds for one year?**

If your county has specific funding constraints, you should complete a comprehensive application and ask for one year of funding. This makes you ineligible for any state matching funds for the remainder of this extension. Or you may estimate the maximum anticipated funding for the entire extension and complete budget forms in your application for all 18 months, then request yearly agreement forms from First 5 California with only the first year of funding guaranteed for your county. This will then make you eligible for funding for the entire extension if funds are available. First 5 California will require your formal agreement forms for FY 2008/09 by December 31, 2008. If your application is awaiting approval from the county commission or Board of Supervisors, please request the maximum anticipated amount, noting its pending approval from funding partners. Upon approval, you would need to resubmit the appropriate budget and funding partner's pages.

**IV. Priority Zones**

**1. Are we permitted to fund only priority zones? Can we continue to serve participants outside the high priority zones with the local match funds? Once we have served all of the providers who have applied in the high priority zones, can we use the match funds to serve providers outside the high priority zones?**

Priority for all new participants receiving the state match portion is for those from School Readiness-eligible communities and low supply areas. Unless a county provides evidence that extensive outreach has occurred and full participation already has been achieved, the expectation is that the state portion of the funding must emphasize and target these priority populations. Counties may provide justification for other uses of the state match portion in the case of saturation of eligible providers in the target areas and in the case of other high priority areas specific to county needs that do not align with priority zones. The county portion of the funding may go to staff in non-priority zones. Specific groups, such as family child care, are also a priority for state funds (page 11).



**2. Please define what constitutes a priority zone.**

Priority zones are areas with (1) a low supply of licensed child care, and (2) School Readiness communities where the schools rank within the first five deciles of the Academic Performance Index (API).

**3. What year is being used as the basis for the API score? In calculating low API and low supply, may we make changes each year?**

In the Round 4 Extension, similar to the School Readiness Index (SRI), the API score used is based on the FY 1999-2000. However, the 2004 Base is now available at CDE <http://api.cde.ca.gov/datafiles.asp> and your county may use the more current information if you feel that the data from 1999/00 is not reflective of the current situation. Please note which data you are utilizing and why.

**4. What do counties without API 1-3 do?**

First 5 California has expanded the priority zone to API 1-5 to accommodate rural counties. In your application, please define areas being targeted and note the lack of API 1-3 or 1-5. The priority zones also consist of areas with a low supply of licensed child care. Counties with a lack of School Readiness (SR) areas can focus on low supply areas as well as the areas they will be targeting with their local SR program.

**5. Can low capacity be defined as low infant care, or is it other types of typically low-supply care such as non-traditional hours?**

The intent of CARES is to target geographic areas with a low overall supply. At the same time, First 5 California acknowledges that licensed spaces for infant/toddler care and non-traditional hours care are low compared to the demand. Counties that first target the priority zones could then use local or remaining state funds to target types of care. The type of care and manner in which the funding is being targeted should be noted in the application.

**6. The Round 4 RFF indicates that stipends for participants in priority zones be funded with state funds and the remaining participants be funded by local funds. Does this mean that all expenditures need not be divided proportionately between local and matching funds?**

The first priority for state matching funds is participants from SR eligible communities and low supply areas. Counties may provide justification regarding priority zones, other uses of the state match portion in the case of saturation of eligible providers in the target areas, and in the case of other high priority areas specific to county needs that do not align with priority zones. There is no such stipulation on the county portion of the funding.

## **V. Participant Requirements and Track Requirements**

### **1. Are Head Start staff eligible for Prop 10 incentives?**

Yes. Please ensure that CARES funds supplement, not supplant, Head Start funds. Head Start funds may not be used as part of the local investment to obtain state matching funds. Head Start staff are eligible to participate in CARES and receive stipends.

### **2. In terms of the nine month period that a provider must have provided care in order to be eligible to receive state retention incentive funds, are there any exceptions?**

The following specific exceptions are approved by First 5 California and each program will need to describe its annual requirements/parameters for these exceptions in their application. Only the first two are required exceptions, the rest are optional for counties to adopt:

- Staff working in migrant programs or in school-based programs that are not year-round.
- FFN child caregivers who do not receive pay for their services.
- Cases of center closure and true promotion (as long as a staff member worked at a site for nine months within the previous fiscal year and a minimum of three months within the current fiscal year, and the staff member obtains a new qualifying job within a month of leaving the previous position).
- Family Leave (as long as the staff member worked at a site for six months within the previous fiscal year, and a minimum of three months within the current fiscal year, and is currently back at the same work site when he/she receives a stipend).
- If there are other local exceptions that you feel are necessary for your CARES Program, you may request prior approval (approval not guaranteed) in your application (page 16).

### **3. Does the nine-month period worked have to be a period of nine consecutive months?**

No.

- 4. In terms of the 15-hour/week minimum to qualify for CARES, is there any flexibility in the number of hours?**

The criteria listed on page # 16, as with all eligibility and participation requirements, are minimum levels required by First 5 California. Individual county commissions may require additional hours or months.

- 5. How does First 5 California define the nine months minimum tenure of employment? Are there a certain number of weeks or days for employment in the field for eligibility? Does a provider have to work fifteen hours each week to qualify?**

No. First 5 California does not require a certain number of days or weeks, only the specified nine months and the fifteen hours/week.

- 6. On pages 15-16 of the RFF, under General Minimum Entry Eligibility Requirements, it states that participants include providers who are legally exempt from licensure.**

Those not licensed must apply for licensure and achieve licensure by the second year of participation in the program (with the exception of those in the FFN Track and those providing care in the child's home, those working at a public school-based site, or those employed in a facility exempt from licensure by the DSS/CCL Division because it is either administered by a tribal council or located on a U.S. military installation).

- 7. The other facilities exempt from licensure are preschool programs operated by cities, usually through the Parks and Community Services Divisions. Will employees of this type program now be eligible to participate in CARES, knowing that they will continue to be exempt from licensure?**

Yes.

- 8. Can participants who work for the same program/employer/agency but have moved sites within the nine-month period still be eligible to participate?**

Yes. It is First 5 California's intent that early educators are eligible if they move to different sites within one agency in order to cover those who may have worked for the same agency but at different sites due to administrative decisions.

- 9. Are there any restrictions for people who skipped a year? Are they considered returning or new? Can the decision be left up to the county?**

All participants must meet the General Minimum Entry Eligibility Requirements on pages 15-16 before they are eligible to participate in the CARES Program. Providers who skip a year in the CARES Program are considered returning participants.

- 10. How many children do early educators need to serve to be eligible? How many children for Family Child Care providers? What is the best way to verify this?**

Eligible educators will be providing care for at least one child other than their own that is ages birth to five for a minimum of 15 hours per week. Counties may increase that number if they choose to do so.

- 11. Can a center-based staff person come into the Entry Track II with zero units? Can a county decide to start with one-half or one unit instead?**

Yes. No units are required for entry into the Entry Track II. Counties may only raise the entry education requirements specific to a Track. This does not apply to the General Minimum Entry Eligibility Requirements for Participants in All Tracks on pages 15-16 if they can demonstrate that a connected program provides training and incentives for that level of entry point, and participants can transfer into CARES when the earlier training is completed (e.g., local CCIP program allows FCC to obtain three ECE units), (page 19).

- 12. Are there any Professional Development (Professional Growth) hours required for Tracks II-IV?**

No. Although participants in these Tracks are still required to meet annually with a CARES Advisor and complete and annually submit a Professional Development Plan, Professional Development Hours are not required. Entry Track II FCC participants have the option of using Professional Development Hours to fulfill their annual participation requirements (page 20).

- 13. Do all participants have to obtain a Child Development Permit?**

All participants applying for the Permit Track must have applied for an Assistant Level or higher level Permit to qualify (pages 19-21).

- 14. What child care center employees are eligible for participation? Can program directors who do not directly work with children qualify for a stipend?**

Yes. In center-based programs, all teaching staff and administrative staff that directly supervise staff working with children and meet the necessary qualifications are eligible, regardless of job title and program type (pages 15-16).

- 15. What is First 5 California's position on stipends for substitutes who have worked at multiple sites?**

First 5 California matching funds and local funding used to obtain the state match may not be used for stipends for substitutes who have worked at multiple sites.

- 16. Will a provider be eligible if they have switched jobs? What if they have switched sites?**

Yes. As long as they have worked at the new job for at least nine months prior to applying, or fit under a promotion exception that is outlined by the county in the CARES application, and approved by First 5 California.

- 17. Can California Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing (DSS/CCL) Division license-exempt public schools be included along with tribal lands and U.S. military installations?**

Yes (page 15).

- 18. Can license-exempt providers receiving payment from an Alternative Payment Program participate in the FFN Track?**

Yes. FFN caregivers **may** receive pay for their services, but do not **have** to receive pay to participate. However, participants in all other Tracks must be receiving pay in order to participate.

- 19. Do we have to retain the Track's names listed in the RFF?**

No. You may keep local names for Tracks as long as you make clear which Track your names correspond, and as long as they meet the minimum requirements set forth by the state.

- 20. Is there a particular proportional percentage of the total number of participants expected for each of the three required Tracks?**

No. Outreach efforts should result in participants in each Track, with the appropriate supports to increase their professional qualifications.

**21. Do we have the latitude to enroll participants for one to three years?**

Participants must meet the General Minimum Entry Eligibility Requirements to enter the CARES Program and must also meet the specific Annual Participation Requirements of the Track in which they are participating. The enrollment process and term are left to the county commission.

**22. Please explain the difference between a FFN provider and a non-licensed provider.**

FFN is an unlicensed caregiver (not always license-exempt). Unlicensed (or non-licensed caregivers) are caregivers who do not have a license to care for children other than their own. They are most frequently family members (grandparents and aunts are most common) and are often non-intentional caregivers (did not choose this as a profession but are helping out the family).

They can move into the Entry Track II, but once there would need to become licensed to participate for a second year in that Track and would need to start earning units or professional development hours. They would also receive a stipend in the Entry Track, which is not necessarily the case in the FFN Track.

**23. Can providers in Entry Track II also receive the non-monetary awards? Is this a local decision?**

No.

**24. Please explain why in the Entry Track II its one unit or 18 Professional Development Hours? Why 18 Professional Development Hours instead of 15 Professional Development Hours? For Permit renewal, don't three unit classes translate into four to five Professional Growth Hours why are we asking participants to do additional hours?**

The CARES Program encourages people to move up the Permit Matrix and increase their education. The CARES standards are higher. Permit renewal isn't attached to incentives but CARES **is** attached to incentives/stipends. CARES also stresses that the purpose of the units is more than just education – it is professional involvement in the field (attending local meetings/conferences, getting additional units, etc.).

**25. Are there any changes to the standardized fields?**

The fields are clearer than they were in the last RFF. In the middle of Round 4 changes were made to what the FFN Caregivers needed to submit and those changes are laid out in this RFF (May 2008).

**26. Does the self-evaluation tool need to be either the Clifford/Harms or the Head Start evaluation tool? Can we select some other tool?**

As found on page 17, #3 of the RFF, "Acceptable self-evaluation tools include:

- Harms/Clifford Early Childhood Rating Scale.
- Program Review Instrument for Service Monitoring (PRISM) (only allowable for participants working in Head Start programs)
- Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO).
- Some other professionally appropriate assessment instrument, aligned with CDE guidelines or learning standards."

**27. Why do FCC providers need a Permit?**

The Entry Track II does not require permits for participants and FCC are not required to obtain units under this Track. Once FCC providers move along the Tracks and toward the professional end of the continuum, the requirements for all participants become the same. The Permit Track requires Permits of all participants. The intent behind the requirement is that permits help professionalize the early learning field and bring in a certain level of standardization.

**28. Can applicants who have taken units and coursework during the current year count those units toward their CARES Program even if they sign up for CARES after the courses are completed?**

If local policy allows this, and the applicant meets all current entry and annual requirements, and the units and coursework are completed within the CARES Program year, this would be allowed.

**29. Does the participant have to follow the Professional Development Plan exactly as written? What role do the college advisors play?**

This is a local decision. Changes in Plans need to be discussed with the CARES Advisor and recorded on the Plan. The role of college advisors is also a local decision.

**30. Can a participant stay in the Permit Track and work on getting their B.A. – since the Permit advancement has this included? They then would only need to take three units each year and not six.**

Yes. Participants in the Permit Track III can also work on obtaining a degree. The Degree Track IV is separate to encourage more rapid movement toward a

degree (with the incentives/ stipends related to that) and to allow for participants to focus on obtaining a degree regardless of their site responsibilities or title (see Appendix C, pages 1-5).

**31. Can Professional Track V be unique for a county – they could possibly use it to increase Professional Growth Advisors but not necessarily CARES Advisors?**

While there is room for local decisions in Track V, its intent is not solely to create more Professional Growth Advisors. As this is CARES funding, in order to be eligible for the Professional Track stipend, the participant must undergo the local/state CARES requirements that differentiate a CARES Advisor from a Professional Growth Advisor.

**32. Please explain more about people who are in Track V and the example of the requirement for a professional/leadership position such as rating scale scores.**

As this is considered a professional position we set a minimum educational Permit standard and expect counties to develop their own local requirements. Since participants in Track V will be role models for others in the field, each county needs to develop local standards so that their participants meet that intent.

**33. In the FFN Track – what are some good ways to verify that the participants are caring for a child other than their own – parent letters?**

The county commission shall determine what verification is necessary.

**34. Can college units that participants obtained between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 count towards the annual participation requirements, i.e. to fulfill requirements to receive a stipend by September 2008? If not, is the timeframe that participants need to meet the annual participation requirements July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009?**

The stipends issued in September 2009 would be for the FY 2008-09 program and participants would have to meet program requirements during FY 2008-09. Participants must be enrolled in a program that meets Round 4 Extension requirements by September 30, 2008. The county may use FY 2007-08 as a transition year and allow participants to meet Round 4 requirements during this time period. By July 1, 2008, all participants must be enrolled in a program that meets Round 4 requirements.



**35. When does the clock start for the maximum time a participant may stay in each Track?**

The clock starts when the county enters Round 4, but no later than September 30, 2008.

**36. Can a CARES applicant be in two Tracks at the same time? Or be paid staff and also apply for an incentive? (For example, pursuing a B.A. or M.A. while acting as a Professional Growth Advisor in the professional Track OR being paid as a part-time CARES Professional Growth Advisor and receiving an incentive for being in the Degree Track.)**

No. CARES participants may not be in two Tracks concurrently. It is a local decision, following local county guidelines, if paid staff also could be a participant.

**37. Will you be posting some successful or suggested incentive formulas for Track V Professional Track? Should there be a cap per applicant? Should CARES Advisors be given a range or allowed to track their own hours (within reason) as needed?**

These are some important local decisions that you will need to provide in your application but, at this time, the state is not setting guidelines on these decisions. We suggest that each program decide on a funding cap per participant in Track V and decide on guidelines to verify that participants are conducting the requirements for the stipend.

**38. When you say that a degree needs to be related to ECE/Child Development, can you define “related”? For example, could it be a Human Development, Psychology or Elementary Ed. degree?**

Yes. All of the above relate to ECE/Child Development as long as the participant takes several child development courses under those degrees.

**39. On page 15 of the RFF, under the General Minimum Entry Eligibility Requirements - who is required to apply for licensure by the second year?**

All participants in Tracks II-V are required to be licensed providers, work in a licensed facility, or be legally exempt from licensure. If the participant is not licensed, s/he must apply for licensure and achieve licensure by the second year of participation in the program (with the exception of those providing care in the child's home, those working at a public school-based site, or those employed in a facility exempt from licensure by the DSS/CCL Division because it is either administered by a tribal council or located on a U.S. military installation).

- 40. In Attachment C, there are timelines for Track II - three years for center-based, and four years for Family Child Care. Is it alright to make a local decision to extend a year or is this set in stone?**

Center-based is set in stone. That has been in the RFF from the beginning. It was expected that in Track II they would get those needed units and move into Track III.

- 41. KCET has worked with several counties to develop a quick "quiz" for someone to get professional growth hours through watching the "A Place of Our Own/Los Ninos en Su Casa" series. How does that fit into CARES?**

Although Professional Development Hours are not required for any Track except the Professional Track V, both Track I and Track II still fit well with the KCET series. CARES Programs develop their own requirements for the FFN Track I and may choose to use the KCET series as one of them. Also, in the Entry Track II, CARES Programs have the option of requiring for family child care providers either professional development hours or units. Tracks III and IV are focused on academic units although counties can decide to add more stringent requirements than the state has and some may decide to add on professional development hours.

- 42. Should non-counted hours be included in the Professional Development Plan?**

Yes.

- 43. Would a person who is serving as a mentor with the California Early Childhood Mentor Project be able to serve in a Professional Development Advisor capacity (different duties than they would perform as a mentor) and receive a CARES stipend as an advisor on the Professional Track without having to give up their work as a mentor -- they would not be working with the same people as an advisor that they work with as a mentor.**

Yes. As long as they are serving different roles. Their CARES stipend must be related to serving only CARES participants.

- 44. Are retired caregivers allowed to participate in the Professional Track?**

In order to participate in the Professional Track and receive a stipend/incentives, the caregiver must satisfy the minimum eligibility requirements, which includes providing "child care for pay at least 15 hours per week to children birth to five in the same CDSS/CCL Division licensed or license-exempt FCC home, state preschool, Head Start, or child care center for at least nine months during the

past year.” Retired caregivers may, however, be hired as paid staff to serve in the capacity of CARES Advisor or CARES Mentor.

**45. Does the Permit Track include Program Directors?**

Yes. However, after obtaining a Program Director Permit, a participant is expected to move into Degree Track IV or Professional Track V to remain in the CARES Program.

**46. Is there a maximum number of units or Professional Growth Hours a provider can take per year in Track II? For example, can a provider take a three-unit class and thirty-six hours of Professional Growth in one year?**

There is no maximum number of units or Professional Development Hours that a provider can take per year while in Track II. However, once the participant reaches six ECE units, regardless of the amount of time in the Entry Track, they must move into the Permit Track or they will no longer be eligible to participate in CARES. Furthermore, extra hours in one year cannot be used to meet the next year’s continuation requirements.

**47. Will First 5 California accept non-unit bearing ESL courses taken through adult programs as meeting the Entry Track requirement? Incentives would be based on comparable hours. For example, fifty-four hours would be equivalent to a three-unit course.**

In both the Entry and Permit Tracks, participants who are deemed English Language Learners (ELL) by their local CARES Program based on local criteria may take ESL and study skills classes that are not for official units as long as they are taken through a process approved by the local CARES Program (for example, through the adult school or at the community college but not offered for units). Entry and Permit level participants who need study skills classes, not offered locally for units, in order to obtain or move up the Permit (i.e. to take a GE English or math class) may take those classes and apply the applicable hours for the unit. The local CARES Program must justify in their application the need for this allowance of Professional Development Hours instead of official units.

The CARES Program seeks to support participants while also encouraging them to increase their education. It seems likely that some participants will first need ESL and study skills to be successful. If it would create too much of a barrier to require only units in such cases, First 5 California will consider non-unit options for ESL and study skills classes.

**48. Can county commission funds or other local funds be used to provide local matching funds for more than one First 5 California initiative, e.g. School Readiness, CARES?**

County commission and other local funds can only be used once as local matching funds for a First 5 California initiative.

**49. Can local First 5 California funds already committed to a child care/ECE program be used as part of the county match?**

County commission funds committed to projects that will become part of your CARES Program, serving CARES participants, during the current fiscal year may be counted as local match. Funds committed to programs, or parts of programs, not included in CARES cannot be considered as a match. First 5 California funds may be used to expand an existing or previously planned program that is consistent with the initiative and is included as part of the county's application. Describe any sources of local match and the program component in your application. Associated program coordination/management costs may be included (page 24-25).

**50. If we are funding a training program/class for ECE staff or home visiting with family child care providers, can we use this as part of the local match since it relates to the program supports?**

Yes. The project must directly relate to the participants in your CARES Program and the local investment is part of your CARES Program. The training/class or home visiting must be to support the participants in your CARES Program (so that they can continue to participate and be eligible again the following year) or must be a required component for them to receive their retention incentive/stipend.

**51. May we use local accreditation funding by Prop 10 or a local business to a county child care program as a match?**

Only if it directly relates to staff's participation in the CARES Program and is a cash match. For example, if you require or suggest that program directors and FCC owners have their sites become accredited for continued participation in CARES, then you could help cover those costs. This would fall under program supports. Any funding used as local match must be cash and represented in the local audit, with appropriate documentation available.

- 52. What if there is a quality improvement initiative funded by the local commission that supports stipends, accreditation and small program improvements?**

It must be for CARES Program participants.

- 53. There is a program in our county called "Get Ready," which is funded by our First 5 Commission. The program goals are to implement Social/Emotional Curriculum throughout the county in preschool settings and family childcare homes. Since over half of the Get Ready Participants are in the CARES Program, can that portion of Get Ready funds be used as a match?**

Yes. First 5 California will match the CARES related portion if it becomes part of a local CARES requirement or support service.

- 54. Can we use funds as an incentive to attract people to the field?**

No. The initiative is to retain those already providing care in the field.

- 55. Can we use ELOA funds, local CCIP incentives, or center-based quality improvement grants as part of the local match?**

No.

- 56. If we have a combined AB 212/CARES, do we have to create separate applications for each so that people aren't applying for both, or can we continue to have one application process? Internally can we determine which funding source the applicant is eligible for?**

You may continue to have only one application.

- 57. How many counties have folded AB 212 funds into the CARES Program?**

At least 42 counties are totally linked.

- 58. Are counties' CalWORKS Performance Incentive Funds and Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIBs) funds allowable sources of local match?**

In general, state and federal funds are not allowed as local match for this project. However, to promote collaboration in seeking long-term solutions to this workforce issue, counties' CalWORKS Performance Incentive Funds and Local Workforce Investment Board funds may be used as sources of local match under these conditions:

- The county commission assures that the funds are used consistent with the provisions of state and federal law and in furtherance of this project.
- The funds are traceable as cash match in the audit, with appropriate documentation available.
- The county commission fulfills the requirement for the local Prop. 10 portion of local match.

**59. In the RFF, license-exempt staff can now receive retention incentive funds with the stipulation that they become licensed to participate in the second year (licensing does not pertain to FFN Track I). Turnaround time with regards to fingerprinting in the licensure process may prevent us from issuing stipends by the end of the fiscal year to those staff that are license-exempt. May they still participate and just hold their incentive/stipend until their licensure application clears?**

Yes. First 5 California acknowledges that there can be unforeseen delays in the licensure process. Programs may award license-exempt staff that are actively applying for licensure and simply hold the applicant's incentive/stipend until the process is complete. The participant would then receive the incentive once s/he becomes licensed.

**60. Do we have to report how AB 212 funds are expended?**

While we do not expect the same level of detail for AB 212 funds as for state matching (CARES) funds, please provide a very brief description of how the funds are being expended with respect to the CARES Program.

**61. Will the project allow counties to pool funds?**

Yes. Consistent with the California Children and Families Act, county commissions may collaborate to implement joint projects.

**62. What funds may be used as sources of local investment?**

AB 212 (Chapter 547, Statutes of 2000) funds and other state funds or Head Start funds may **not** be included in the local investment for matching. CalWORKS Performance funds and Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) funds may be used as local match.

“Counties are required to account for these funds separately for reporting and auditing purposes. **All funds used to obtain the state match must adhere to the guidelines in this RFF and may not be used as local matching funds to**

**draw down other First 5 California Matching Funds dollars (e.g., School Readiness or Preschool For All)."**

The state and local cash match for CARES must be accounted for separately in the audit.

**63. If the Local Child Care Planning Council is putting some money into the program, can we use that as part of the match?**

No. Not if the funds are state funds.

**64. Should the state and federal fund amounts be listed?**

Yes. While state and most federal funds may not be included in the local investment for matching, First 5 California needs to see them listed in order to better understand a county's programs and costs. CalWORKS Performance funds and LWIB funds may be included in the match.

**65. Where should non-matching funds be listed?**

Non-matching funds should be listed in the budget narrative section of your county's application. A brief description of the origin of the funds and their intended use would help First 5 California in better understanding your county's retention incentives program.

**66. If we need to adjust our budget, by moving monies among certain line items, after First 5 California's approval of our application, do we need permission to do so?**

No. Budget adjustments must be noted in the expenditure and progress reports due to First 5 California on October 16, 2009. The funds may be transferred among the budget line items as long as they are still spent directly on this program. First 5 California's expectation is that the funds go to staff in the form of compensation/stipends/incentives. Funds may also be used for training and supports for staff to participate in this project.

**67. We are trying to ensure that our CARES stipend recipients are listed as "confidential vendors," ensuring that their names and addresses never become public record. Though we cannot find anything in the state contract, we assumed that the recipients should remain confidential. Is there any documentation stating that the recipients can or should remain "confidential?"**

No. Nothing at the state level states that stipend recipient payments should remain confidential. The issue of confidentiality would be a county level decision.

- 68. Utilizing CARES Advisors and Professional Development Plans – do these providers, who will serve as advisors and receive stipends on the Professional Track, need to be previous CARES recipients or can they be new CARES participants? Can they be AB 212 recipients? We need to find these advisors in our counties to assist with the professional development of our workforce. However, we are unsure of the requirements for these advisors and their necessary status with CARES.**

The RFF does not specifically require CARES Advisors to be previous CARES recipients. Participants in the Professional Track V must meet local CARES requirements for a professional/leadership position. Participants receiving a stipend as a CARES Advisor may not be AB 212 recipients.

- 69. Appendix C of the RFF states that center-based staff in the Entry Track II need three units per year to stay in the CARES Program. Should they have moved into the Permit Track IV after Year three? What if they apply for a Permit prior to the maximum time allowable in the Entry Track?**

Yes. Center-based teachers are allowed three years before they “time-out” of the Entry Track. CARES Programs can move them into the Permit Track more quickly than the allotted three years. Once they have a Permit, they need to move into the Permit Track and have up to ten years in that Track.

- 70. In Appendix C it states that “participants must submit an official dated certificate copy signed by the instructor or a signed letter from the sponsoring agency showing the number of professional development hours for each workshop/training attended.” Does the certificate go to the local CARES office of the CARES Advisor?**

This is a local decision.

- 71. Do first time CARES participants have to wait two years to receive their stipend so they can fulfill the continued *annual* requirements?**

Minimum eligibility requirements, such as the nine months worked requirement, must be met before the end of the program year in which the participant is participating and before receiving a stipend.

- 72. FFN Track I. In Appendix C, it says that the maximum time in the FFN Track I is indefinite, although participants can move in the Entry Track I. Do they need to become licensed at that time?**

If the FFN participant is not licensed at the time they transition in to the Entry Track, then s/he must apply for licensure and achieve licensure by the second year of participation in the Entry Track.



**73. Who is required to apply for licensure by the second year?**

The licensure requirement applies to all participants, with the exception of FFN caregivers and those listed in Appendix C.

**VI. Fiscal Requirements**

**1. What retention incentives can county commissions utilize?**

Stipends, benefits packages, and health insurance are a few examples of the retention incentives that county commissions may utilize.

**2. Is a program, including accreditation, career development/ counseling/training, and stipends allowable?**

First 5 California will not match programs that are **solely** related to training, financing accreditation or education costs, or projects that do not provide a type of compensation directly to qualified early learning staff (page 26).

**3. In Budget Attachment A of the RFF, what constitutes “training”?**

Training must be directly related to the early learning teacher participants receiving the compensation/retention incentives, and should be related to the annual requirements for them.

**4. What processes have other counties developed for using a subcontractor?**

County policies must be followed in determining a subcontractor. First 5 California encourages county commissions to collaborate and share information with one another. The CARES administrator list-serve, provided through the CARES T&TA contract would be a good place to communicate with other programs on their procedures.

**5. Can funds be used with people who don’t work directly with children?**

Yes. Center-based programs that have teaching staff and administrative early childhood educators who directly supervise those working with children and meet the qualifications outlined below are eligible to participate in the CARES Program regardless of job title and program type (page 15).

**6. Can we pay for Permits for participants?**

Yes. They must qualify and if a Permit is one of the program requirements for a participant.

**7. Can funds be used for substitute teachers so that participants may attend training?**

Yes.

**8. Should training for child care providers be linked to units?**

Yes. This supports participants' attainment of a Child Development Permit and Child Development degrees (May 2008, see page 14, #6 and page 17).

**9. Is it acceptable to include the optional Tracks IV & V in the our RFF proposal, and then if we are unable to offer the Tracks IV & V once we see how many participants we have in the mandatory Tracks, submit a RFF revision?**

Yes. You will need to indicate such a plan in your application narrative and budget. You must inform First 5 California in an application addendum if you decide to implement, or not implement, Tracks or any other programmatic changes. If you choose not to make changes already provided for in the application, you must either reduce your project budget and submit revised budget forms, or justify maintaining the same funding levels. Should you choose not to include additional Tracks in this application, but decide to develop them later, you must plan accordingly as you will not be able to request additional funds.

**10. On page 13 of the RFF, it states that "All CARES Programs need to offer program support services as well as training and Educational Professional Development opportunities." Do these services, training, and opportunities have to be provided directly by the CARES Program? Or can we link to those services, etc.?**

You do not have to fund such services if they are readily accessible and you inform participants about how to access them (May 2008).

**11. Can you define what a benefit/incentive package is? Would that include time off to take classes or be limited to financial awards or health benefits?**

A benefit/incentive package would be health benefits, retirement package, stipends etc. Time off to take classes or a use of a sub would be a program support service (page 13).

- 12. Are ECE staff working with five-year olds eligible to participate, or just those working with children under five? In other words, is the age requirement "zero through five?"**

First 5 California funds are for children ages prenatal to five. In many cases, county commissions have their own guidelines on the use of this term. CARES will follow the First 5 School Readiness Program so that matching funds can be distributed to staff working with children to age five (through the fifth birthday), as long as these children have not entered kindergarten.

- 13. Can in-kind funds be used as a local match?**

No. In-kind funds will not be matched. First 5 California will match only cash investments.

- 14. If our commission recently voted to increase its investments in the Early Childhood Strategy, is it acceptable to request an increased match? How much are we allowed to ask for?**

We have stated that we may have to decline or reduce amounts depending upon what is requested from all of the counties. But you may request the funds as long as they are in your application extension (May 2008).

- 15. If I have people between July 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009 who are coming to re-enroll in our CARES Program, and they have completed their activities in the previous year, do they fall into this budget? Who can we pay?**

They must have completed their program work by June 30, 2009, so they must have completed their program prior to July 1, 2009. The program year ends at the end of June 2009 (May 2008).

- 16. Our program year doesn't line up with your program year. Our year lasts from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, so does that mean that we would just have a short program year? Or would we have everyone complete their annual requirements by June 30<sup>th</sup> to receive the full stipend?**

If a majority of your program year falls into that of the state's fiscal year, then you will be able to provide a full program year for the participants. If, however, your program year falls more into FY 2009/10 than into 2008/09, you will not be able to provide a full program year (May 2008).

- 17. If in fact our local First 5 continues to fund the CARES Program through June 2010, can we utilize the state funds from July through December to carry on all of the training and activities such as ECERS training and Professional Growth Training that we support out of First 5 money at the state and local level? Could we continue to do that even though your funding is going to stop in December, as long as we know that our local is going to continue to help us and pay the stipends for the program year?**

The last six months of the match from July to December of 2009 is considered the “wrap-up” or ending period for your activities of the previous program year. It is not intended for an activity year that starts in September 2009 and goes through June of 2010 (May 2008).

- 18. Will we be able to apply for additional funding for 2008-09 if we want to expand beyond what our current program year is?**

Starting in July, 2008, for that budget period, you may resubmit your budget and increase or decrease the amount that you are requesting. If you have programmatic revisions starting in July, 2008 through December, 2008, and you would like to recalculate your budget, you may re-submit it because it is an extension. Some programs are adding or removing components so their budgets should reflect those changes (May 2008).

- 19. For the previous four years as part of our approved CARES Program, our local commission has funded a family childcare trainer position for local community action agency. The change is that our local community action agency says they can pick up part of the cost of that trainer staff position. So where we previously paid with commission funds, our partner now can contribute part of the cost. I want to include that as eligible local match funds. Do I need to ask my partner if they are paying for part of that position with state funding sources? If they say yes, then am I correct that I cannot consider the portion of that salary that they pick up as local match?**

Yes (May 2008).

- 20. Some state-supported programs require that, in the overall agency budget, a facility rental percentage must be attached to each employee. In light of the restriction on funding facilities, if such employees are involved in administering the matching funds initiative, how should we handle this facilities rental issue?**

It may be listed as an administrative cost, consistent with normal personnel accounting practices. The restrictions are to prevent the renting of new spaces.

- 21. Is it true that we cannot charge facility rent to either matching or local budgets? If so, how does this contract work in a cost allocation plan for shared facility rental?**

First 5 California expects that the majority of state funds will go to retention incentives and then to program supports and outreach activities. While First 5 California funds cannot be used for the acquisition or purchase of fixed or capital assets, this restriction does not impact county commission matching funds. The local match may also be used for facility rental.

- 22. Can we use our local School Readiness Program funds to obtain the state CARES funds?**

No. Double counting the local match for both School Readiness Programs and retention incentive programs is not allowed.

- 23. Can county commission funds or other local funds be used to provide local matching funds for more than one First 5 California initiative (e.g. School Readiness, CARES)?**

County commission and other local funds can only be used once as local matching funds for a First 5 California initiative.

- 24. Can local First 5 funds already committed to a child care/ECE program be used as part of the county match?**

County commission funds committed to projects that will become part of your CARES Program, serving CARES participants, during the current fiscal year may be counted as local match. Funds committed to programs, or parts of programs, not included in CARES cannot be considered as a match. First 5 California funds may be used to expand an existing or previously planned program that is consistent with the initiative and is included as part of the county's application. Please describe any sources of local match and the program component in your application. Associated program coordination/management costs may be included.

- 25. If we are funding a training program/class for ECE staff or home visiting with family child care providers, can we use this as part of the local match since it relates to the program supports?**

Yes. If the project directly relates to the participants in your CARES Program and the local investment is also part of your CARES Program. The training/class or home visiting must be to support the participants in your CARES Program (so that they can continue to participate and be eligible again the following year) or must be a required component for them to receive their retention incentive/stipend.

**26. May we use local accreditation funding by Prop 10 or a local business to a county child care program as a match?**

You may do this only if it directly relates to staff's participation in the CARES Program and is a cash match. For example, if you require or suggest that program directors and FCC owners have their sites become accredited for continued participation in CARES, then you may help cover those costs. Any funding used as a local match must be cash and must be represented in the local audit, with appropriate documentation available.

**27. What if there is a quality improvement initiative funded by the local commission that supports stipends, accreditation and small program improvements?**

It must be for CARES Program participants and it must follow the guidelines listed in the RFF.

**28. Is the actual match for large counties 20 percent or 25 percent?**

The state match for large counties is up to 25 percent of the local match or 20 percent of the total investment. Therefore, First 5 California will match one dollar for every four dollars of local funds invested. The state match is with respect to the county investment and not the total program budget. Smaller counties are matched at up to a 50 percent rate. Please refer to Appendix A on page 32 of the RFF to determine which rate is the match for each county.

**29. Regarding funding, will there be a requirement for the maximum amount of funding used for training and evaluation as there was in the previous application? For example, there has always been a ten percent allowable expense for training and a five percent allowable expense for evaluation activities. I did not see any specific requirements in the Expansion RFF regarding percentages and allowable expenditures have there been any set? I need this information in order to build our budget before we can give our local commission a dollar amount, which will be needed to administer the program. In addition, are there requirements regarding allowable expenses for administrative costs associated with staffing?**

With respect to the CARES Program, First 5 California has never stipulated a minimum or maximum amount of funds that can or must be spent on any specific category. However, there is an expectation that the majority of the funds go to the providers as stipends/incentives/training and support services. Contact your county commission with regards to minimum/maximum amounts of funding and allowable expenses.

- 30. Are we allowed to use local First 5 monies that fund local programs as part of our match? If so, do these programs have to serve CARES participants directly, or can they serve child care providers in general (for example, if we fund educational opportunities for non-CARES providers, can we count that money)?**

County commission funds committed to projects that will become part of your CARES Program, serving CARES participants, during the current fiscal year may be counted as local match. Funds committed to programs, or parts of programs, not included in CARES cannot be considered as match. You are not allowed to use your local School Readiness Program funds or local funds to match other First 5 California programs to obtain state CARES funds.

## **VII. Reporting and Evaluation Requirements**

- 1. How often are progress reports expected?**

Progress and expenditure reports are due on October 15, 2008 and on October 19, 2009, with the exception of the final reports, which are due on February 16, 2009. Please refer to page 30 for a list of expenditure and progress report due dates.

- 2. How much can we expect to spend on evaluation? What is the cost to modify the database? What types of data will county commissions need to collect? What fields are in the database?**

The time and money spent in collecting and entering the data will vary depending upon the program and application. Include this cost in your budget as it qualifies for match. As part of First 5 California's CARES T&TA, we have a database contract with Andrew J. Wong, Inc. (AJWI), who can help you with any needed database modifications. The Standards Fields can be found in Appendix I.

- 3. What should continuing participants (participants from the earlier rounds) do concerning consent forms for the evaluation?**

All applicants for Round 4 Extension funding must complete the updated consent form along with their application. The revised consent form for participants to review and sign is included in Appendix H. The revised consent form will allow First 5 California and its designee access to all data.

- 4. Do we have to use the language found on the sample consent form on Appendix H?**

Yes. Please contact Gretchen Williams, [gwilliams@ccfc.ca.gov](mailto:gwilliams@ccfc.ca.gov), if you need to modify the consent language for your program.

- 5. I see from the RFF that we need to release the participant data to the state. How will we be accomplishing this?**

Data transmittal will occur annually, in the same manner as previous program years, via the CARES database.

- 6. Is Appendix H of the RFF a definitive list of the required information?**

This information is complete. Should you have any concerns and/or comments on fields and formatting, please contact Gretchen Williams at [gwilliams@ccfc.ca.gov](mailto:gwilliams@ccfc.ca.gov).

- 7. Is there a particular schedule for counties obtaining the demographic information from First 5 California?**

Demographic information can be obtained periodically from AJWI, as needed, once updated data has been transmitted.

- 8. Our School Readiness areas are covered by AB 212 participants. Will you be collecting information on these participants as well so we can demonstrate the coverage in priority zones?**

Yes.

- 9. Who typically provides local evaluations? Could you provide some successful, doable (not expensive or too labor intensive) examples of evaluations? Local evaluation in our county will probably continue to be done by our ongoing CARES Advisory group. Near the beginning of the program year we create a pre-application spreadsheet in order to track potential applicants throughout the year. We collect data fields such as location of home & workplace, level of education, etc. We could easily add language & ethnicity questions. Would we then be on the right track?**

Local evaluations may be performed by vendors, county staff and internally. When planning your evaluation determine what questions you have about the program and who is the source of the inquiry. Based on the information you need and the amount of money you have to spend, counties can create their evaluation plan and determine a course of action. Identifying participants based on demographics, education, and other characteristics is a good place to start – and are all required data fields in the CARES database. Also, please refer to the Evaluation Section and Database Appendix I in the CARES RFF so that you are familiar with data you will collect for the statewide evaluation.



**10. Should we report out stipends for the public sector?**

Incentives and stipends from sources other than CARES and AB 212 are not required reporting. If you feel this data would be informative this data may be input into the database.

**11. What data is required for FFN?**

Data on FFN Track I participants will not be as rigorous as data collected for other Tracks. A defined listing of the data to collect for the FFN Track is in Appendix I.

**12. Should we keep inputting data in the current database?**

Yes. Input participant data up to program year FY 2007/08 and collect data for FY 2008/09. First 5 California will notify counties when database changes for FY 2008/09 are complete, ready to install, and when data may be input.

**13. Should there be a separate entry application for potential FFN providers to complete?**

It is a county commission's decision as to whether there should be a separate entry application for FFN caregivers. Due to the fact that data requirements for this Track I will be less than other Tracks, you may want to have a separate application for FFN caregivers.

**14. Are potential FFN providers indicating income on the application or can that be left blank?**

Please request income. It is up to the county if you require that FFNs provide income level.

**15. If there are undocumented FFN providers, are they eligible to participate without a social security number?**

Yes.

**16. Is there a required number of site visits required by First 5 California, or is it up to each county?**

The number of site visits is not specified by First 5 California. Counties should develop appropriate support and accountability mechanisms and describe those in the application.

- 17. We operate a seamless CARES Program with state, local and AB 212 funds. When we are estimating next year's program participation, do you want the total number or participants or those just funded by state and local First 5 funds?**

We will be collecting data on AB 212 participants. However, please separate participants receiving First 5 California dollars from those receiving AB 212 funds.

## **VIII. Forms**

- 1. If I am adding an additional match that was not in my original plan, and I justify it in my narrative, do I need the signature page completed?**

If you're adding other local partners, yes. If you are not changing participants in your program, you do not need to fill out any form other than Form 1 and the budget pages (May 2008).

- 2. On page 33 of the RFF, in the second bullet regarding the local match, do we need to fill in just the reimbursement funds provided by the state broken out for the audit, or do you need all CARES associated funds both state and local match?**

Yes. You need both because you need to provide documentation of your part of the match. If you are turning in an abbreviated application, you do not need that form. If you already have a CARES Program all you need to fill out is Form 1 and the budget pages.

## **IX. Budgets**

- 1. If we are currently funding at \$1 million a year, should we submit a budget for \$1 million for July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009, and only \$500,000 for July 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009?**

Your budget should reflect the needs of the program. If money will be needed after July 2009 for stipends or incentives, data collecting or evaluation, then the budget should reflect that need (May 2008).

- 2. How do we figure our budgets?**

The budget should reflect the payments that will be made by your program.

- 3. We're really not funding for 18 months, we're funding for 12 months but if some of us funded outside that fiscal year then we'd need to fill that in, correct? You're not allowing us to ask for salaries or anything else from July or December, are you?**

Your budget should reflect the needs of the entire 18 months of the contract. What is not allowed is to begin a new program and bring in more participants during the last six months of the contract (May 2008).

- 4. Would we then be allowed to pay for additional stipends requested after the July date 2009? We're not providing any services after July 2009, we're just closing down and getting stipends that were prior to July 2009?**

Correct. As long as their program work was completed in the fiscal year prior to July 2009 (May 2008).

- 5. When we put the budget detail together for you, it should include all of our local and everything else that we're matching so that this is correctly calculated at the end.**

Yes.

- 6. We have a 15 month contract with First 5 Santa Clara which will run from July 2008 through September 2009. In the past, we've reported the whole fifteen months on what is reflected as Column B on the budget. Can we continue to do that for this extension, or are we required to break out the three months that we'll be invoicing in Column C because our stipends won't be distributed until December 2009?**

They need to correspond by those dates. If you have some funds going out in Column C, they need to be reflected there because First 5 California is reimbursing you (May 2008).

- 7. Is there any possibility when we look at our program close-out that if CARES became a signature program, we would then turn from what was program close-out into actually full operation and would know that in advance? If so, would we be asked to resubmit a budget?**

This Round 4 Extension will end on December 31, 2009. You can only plan your budget for this period of time, since there is no knowledge of what may or may not be available after this contract ends.

- 8. In the original application we wrote out the number and dollar amount for each Track and those numbers have changed. Is that just a budget change or do you want us to talk about that in the program changes?**

It is a budget change. If it is significantly different please add a note of explanation (May 2008).

- 9. You did say that we can request additional funds but there is no guarantee that we would get those. Do you know how soon you would be able to let us know because it does affect our overall program plans?**

Matching awards will be announced by June 19, 2008 (May 2008).